

A Little Levity on "The Administrative Officer"

1. Below is purely the personal expression of my own attempt to assemble and partially digest my random thinking of the past few weeks on what, to me, tends to be a mistaken CIA position - Administrative Officer, particularly in a moderate sized field station.

2. Within the warp and woof of government gobbledy-gook, the term "Administrative Officer" has variously developed synonymity with bureaucrat, chief clerk, paper pusher, clerk, or that person-who-someone-says-we-must-but-I-can't-see-why. To expose my bias early, the thesis is that none of these are accurate when applied to CIA operations. More appropriate synonyms are found in private parlance such as office manager, stage, manager, or executive secretary.

3. Comparison of the CIA mission and operating environment with those of other government structures would be helpful. The moderate field station (20 or under) is variously (1) a small MSA, (2) a GHQ, (3) a field command post, (4) a newspaper editorial room, (5) a college curriculum (agent training), and (6) a business handling products and services as diverse as the scope found in Sears Roebuck. It must know in detail and adjust simultaneously the practices and procedures of (1) the Department of State, (2) Department of Defense, (3) Treasury Department, and (4) private life, profit-making or otherwise, both on U. S. and indigenous standards. So far this is not so tough. The picture becomes more in focus and more complex when one realizes that under all this, it is still a CIA operational base and headquarters, required to covertly maintain its identity and integrity and reconcile its diffuse manifestations to a continuous though often ill-defined structure hung on a firm but evolving skeleton of procedures and regulations. This evolutionary mutation, being something more than fish but not quite fowl, traces its skeletal heredity clearly and respectably to the GAO, while the other aspects of its being have an ancestral commonality with orphans and foundlings - they were born and they live and many times they amount to something but they are many times quite apart from other children. And to match the GAO manual, or the CSC manual, or Army regulations with this Rabelaisian flesh is a monumental task, particularly if one succeeds in this fusion of bone and being by preserving the essential good of each.

4. In some respects the functioning of a field station is like child bearing. The administrative officer is neither father, mother, obstetrician, pediatrician, nor servant-girl, but he (she) ideally is a combination of midwife-governess-housekeeper who sees to it there is plenty of hot water, towels, and smelling salts, that the diapers are kept up with, that junior is scrubbed and cleaned for periodic presentation, that the clothes keep up with the growing boy, that if she should meet an untimely death the incident was properly anticipated and the appropriate complete arrangements made on time. He (she or it) does the same for all junior's brothers and sisters both sick and well, grown and adolescent, aborning and adying.

5. Needless to say this was written at night in one of my moods. However, I don't use hashish or opium; marijuana never agreed with me; my pink elephants are present but well-behaved; and I do think the purple prose has an element of sanity. Otherwise, since you've read this far, you must be as insane as I.

6. I do not contend that the position of Administrative Officer is as the God from whom.....or that the incumbent to qualify should be able or allowed or required to do all things. But the person in this job can, as a single individual, do most to make or break a station, or an operation or agent supported from that station. Obviously, my bias showing again, I firmly believe that investigation of operational breakdowns would reveal administrative (i.e., Administrative Officer) troubles as the greatest cause of ill-health or death.

7. With the above in mind some of the qualifications I now feel required for the job, whether derived from experience or effective forced feeding are:

- a. A reasonable knowledge and bent for operations.
- b. Certainly intelligence and imagination.
- c. A thorough knowledge of regulations, even those not yet thought of, and the general philosophy of principles behind them.
- d. Ability to be judiciously diplomatic, respectable, and bastardly with anyone regardless of race, color or creed.
- e. Undying love of hard work, no praise, long hours, and the unexpected.
- f. Having no idea what the word impossible means.
- g. Experience handling funds and accountings - with meticulous accuracy.
- h. A high concept of moral honesty with the U. S. taxpayers above and beyond the regulations.
- i. A thorough acquaintance with the administrative machinery of CIA.
- j. Be able to type.
- k. Ability to be articulate both verbally and on paper and to leave the right things unsaid as well as answer questions before they are asked.

Needless to say a security clearance is also requisite. A speaking acquaintance with the Shah (anyone knowing Farouk disqualifies) or a knowledge of Arabic or a trip to Mecca are desirable but not absolutely essential qualifications. Matter of fact, this list of criteria is a pretty fair yardstick for judging anyone working for this outfit.

8. Not only should an Administrative Officer handle or be responsible for all the routine administrative matters. At a field station he is the

personnel officer, the logistics officer, the travel clerk, the finance and disbursing officer. Also in another even more important way the Administrative Officer should be a very vital part of the operational team. He should be equipped and expected to look at every operation administratively continuously from the fateful night in bed or in the rumble seat through birth, childhood, manhood, to the grave. Once he sees the gleam in Daddy's (the Station Chief's) eye he should set to work planning the administrative minutiae including the burial site, coffin, headstone, mortician to be hired, keeping the mortician alive ready to work at a moment's notice but meanwhile totally unwitting, plus size and type of handkerchiefs and/or TS cards for the mourners secured by pre-prepared requisition in quintuplicate, and post-dated message to be cabled to next of kin. It's surprising how different some operations would look or be born, if born at all, if it were remembered early that "dust to dust," while not true of the soul, does apply to the body. For this and a number of other reasons the Administrative Officer must be an able operator at heart - a virgin would make a helluva wet nurse! The Administrative Officer must assume that operational goals, and his capability to understand them, are the end and aim of his existence - he to take care of the body and the Station Chief or other operational personnel to care for the soul.

9. Add to this the thought that in our stations anyone who can do anything will be asked or expected to. If the Chief of Station has a burning operational (not personal) need for a belly-dancer and the Administrative Officer is half way qualified - watch out!

10. To say all this another way, the slot reserved for Administrative Officer should never be filled by the old device of "slotting for convenience" just to get a body aboard or to the field. By the same token a clerk-steno or that nice kid you think might develop bears no more resemblance to the Administrative Officer of a station than I do to Lana Turner. The person filling that job is an indispensable specialist and the job, for the sake of God, Country, and smooth operations, should be treated with commensurate concern. The pity of it is that, with all the money and facilities available to this great sprawling monster, no adequate training facility is established to produce good administrative officers. Next to the case officer, the Administrative Officer is the most underrated or neglected being, training-wise, in the whole flux. While not expected to grow like Topsy, he is expected to learn like Topsy. It doesn't necessarily have to be that way.

With best intentions, to whom it may concern - and I hope it concerns you.

JOHN DOE

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